

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000297

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE (NARDI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [IZ](#) [IZPREL](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA: SABOR TO DEBATE POSITION ON IRAQ;  
POLITICS AS USUAL?

REF: A. SECSTATE 34169

[B](#). ZAGREB 292

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ZAGREB 00297 01 OF 02 071534Z

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF A.F.GODFREY FOR REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT WILL HOLD A JOINT HEARING ON FEBRUARY 12 TO DISCUSS CROATIA'S POLICY TOWARD POTENTIAL MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ. SOME OF CROATIA'S LEADING PARLIAMENTARIANS OBJECTED TO NOT BEING CONSULTED IN ADVANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT TAKING A STRONG PUBLIC STANCE WITH OTHER VILNIUS-10 STATES IN SUPPORT OF THE U.S. APPROACH ON IRAQ. IN A MEETING WITH THE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 7, WE WARNED THAT THIS ISSUE MUST NOT BE USED TO SCORE POLITICAL POINTS; PRESIDENT MESIC'S ADDRESS AND THE V-10 STATEMENT SENT A STRONG POSITIVE MESSAGE; THE SABOR SHOULD NOT SEEK TO DILUTE THIS. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) MOST OF CROATIA'S LEADING POLITICIANS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT MESIC, LEARNED OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO JOIN V-10 COUNTRIES ON FEBRUARY 5 IN A STRONG DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION ON IRAQ (REF A) FROM PRESS REPORTING. SOME OF CROATIA'S POLITICIANS ARE OBJECTING TO THE STATEMENT, WHICH THEY CLAIM WAS TAKEN WITHOUT APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION. AS HE OFTEN DOES, PRESIDENT MESIC TOOK THE HIGH ROAD, AND GAVE A TELEVISED ADDRESS ON FEBRUARY 6 (REF B) URGING PEACEFUL RESOLUTION THROUGH SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION, BUT STATED THAT "IF A WAR FOR WHAT IS RIGHT IS INEVITABLE, THEN CROATIA KNOWS WHERE HER PLACE IS." OTHER POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN LESS SUPPORTIVE, BUT MOST OBJECT MORE TO BEING

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ZAGREB 00297 01 OF 02 071534Z

EXCLUDED FROM THE POLICY DECISION RATHER THAN TO THE MERITS OF SUPPORTING THE U.S. POSITION.

3. (C) JOZO RADOS AND IVO BANAC, PRESIDENTS OF TWO OF THE RULING COALITION'S THREE "JUNIOR PARTNER" PARTIES, ISSUED STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE GOC POSITION ON IRAQ. IVO SANADER, PRESIDENT OF CROATIA'S OPPOSITION HDZ, MADE A STATEMENT ON FEBRUARY 6 THAT HIS PARTY "GIVES ITS FULL SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES." (NOTE: THE HDZ DESPERATELY SEEKS INTERNATIONAL VALIDATION FOR ITS INCOMPLETE INTERNAL REFORM PROCESS SO IT CAN CONVINCE CROATIAN VOTERS IT IS NO LONGER THE CORRUPT, EXTREMIST PARTY OF FORMER PRESIDENT TUDJMAN.) OPPOSITION HSL PRESIDENT DRAZEN BUDISA SAID THAT HIS PARTY (WHICH WAS EJECTED FROM THE CURRENT COALITION IN JULY 2002) "FOUND THE STAND OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE SO-CALLED OLD EUROPE MORE REASONABLE AND ACCEPTABLE THAN THAT OF THE VILNIUS GROUP."

LAYING DOWN A MARKER: NO POLITICS ON IRAQ

4. (C) ON FEBRUARY 7, WE MET WITH ANTE MARKOV (HSS, THE SECOND-LARGEST PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION), CHAIR OF THE PARLIAMENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE. A DAY EARLIER, MARKOV WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS REFUSING TO COMMENT ON THE V-10 STATEMENT BECAUSE HE IS NOT CERTAIN "IF THE POSITION EXPRESSED IS THE POSITION OF ALL CROATIA." WE TOLD HIM BLUNTLY THAT THIS IS NOT AN ISSUE ON WHICH TO PLAY POLITICS. MARKOV WAS QUICK TO EXPLAIN THAT HE AND ZDRAVKO TOMAC (SDP), CHAIR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO REACH FM PICULA BEFORE THE STATEMENT WAS RELEASED IN ORDER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ZAGREB 00297 01 OF 02 071534Z

TO DEVELOP A UNIFIED POSITION.

5. (C) MARKOV SAID THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE POSITION EXPRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS ADDRESS AND THE POSITION PUT FORWARD IN THE V-10 STATEMENT. CROATIA SHOULD HAVE A UNIFIED POSITION. THEREFORE, THE SABOR'S NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE AND THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAVE AGREED TO HOLD A JOINT HEARING ON FEBRUARY 12 TO DEVELOP A UNIFIED POSITION.

16. (C) WE TOLD MARKOV THAT WHILE WE WOULD WELCOME AN EVEN  
BROADER CONSENSUS OF CROATIAN SUPPORT FOR OUR VIEW OF THE  
DANGERS PRESENTED BY IRAQ, WE CAUTIONED AGAINST DILUTING THE  
POWERFUL, POSITIVE MESSAGE THAT CROATIA HAS PUT INTO PLAY.  
WE CAUTIONED MARKOV THAT PARLIAMENTARIANS MUST NOT VIEW THEIR  
DECISION ON IRAQ AS CHOOSING BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE EU;  
WHILE THERE IS AS YET NO CONSENSUS WITHIN THE EU, SOME  
LEADING MEMBERS HAVE ALREADY MADE THEIR DECISION. MARKOV  
WELCOMED OUR OFFER TO PROVIDE THE COMMITTEE MEETING WITH  
INFORMATION BASED ON SECRETARY POWELL'S INTERVENTION AT THE  
UNSC.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ5531

PAGE 01 ZAGREB 00297 02 OF 02 071534Z  
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DS-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	NEA-00
	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-01	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/002W				

-----32B640 071534Z /38

O 071511Z FEB 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9411  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY  
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 ZAGREB 000297

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE (NARDI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2013  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [IZ](#) [IZPREL](#)  
SUBJECT: CROATIA: SABOR TO DEBATE POSITION ON IRAQ;  
POLITICS AS USUAL?

ROSSIN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ZAGREB 00297 02 OF 02 071534Z

CONFIDENTIAL

>